Attack by Hackers on Major Websites

*387. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the recent attack by Hackers on major Websites led to disruptions and close down of several websites;

(b) whether this is the first instance of electronic crime; and

(c) if so, what action Government are taking to protect the system and detect the culprits?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

STATEMENT

Several websites in the country and abroad have been affected by the activities of hackers. Such attacks lead to disruptions and closure of several websites. The exact nature of attack and impact cannot be ascertained as it is difficult to pinpoint the geographical locations of the internet sites. Moreover, in the absence of any formal mechanism, affected organisations have also not been reporting about the hacking of their websites. The identity of the hackers often cannot be ascertained as the hackers generally operate under some fictitious names or from other dormant sites.

Internet is a conglomeration of networks having presence in over two hundred countries. It is difficult for any single Government agency to exercise control over it. Solution lies mainly with content/service providers in deploying firewall or security audit system. Information Technology Bill when enacted will act as a deterrent to the activities of the hackers.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Mr. Chairnan Sir, the recent electronics revolution has brought about a major change in the global trade, military and social system. Recently, several websites were tempered with by the hackers, the world over. Our system was also intercepted and affected. Sir, this is only a beginning. The Government in its reply has stated, "It is difficult for any single Government agency to exercise control over it. Solution lies mainly with content/service providers in deploying firewall or security audit system." The private service providers can do that, but that is also not going to solve the problem. This is only a beginning, and Mr. Minister, you would agree

with me that through hackers, our commercial installations, our military installations and our political installations, as far as the computer system is concerned, can be attacked. What does the Government plan to do to tackle such problems, which we can anticipate, in the very near future?

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, there are two things. As I have said in my reply, the solution lies mainly with the content/service providers. They should deploy a firewall or a security auditing system so that the hackers may not come this side. *(Interruptions)* Hacker is somebody like a thief. You just have to lock up your doors properly and have...*(Interruptions)*. But unless you have a firewall system, a hacker will enter into it and he will destroy it and will take your information illegally. So for this, the content/service-providers have to deploy a firewall or security audit system. That means, whether it is a private sector or a public sector, he is a content/service provider. So, he will have to do it. At present, there is no system where the Government can create a law and order situation in the entire websites to see that they are controlled. So, here, one can say that the content/sevice-providers have to create a firewall system or a security audit system. Unfortunately, today, we don't have any law to punish the hackers. That motivates the hacker to hack different websites. All of us are aware that the Information Technology Bill 2000 has been introduced in Parliament. It is under the scrutiny of the Standing Committee. If they kindly submit the report as early as possible, we can make this law, which will help in controlling this menace.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Mr. Chairman, Sir, as I said, this hacking is only a beginning. You would appreciate that through electronic crime, not only the installations can be jammed, but they can be tapped also. I think there is an absolute necessity that the Government should get in touch with other countries which are advanced in this field, and should try to device a method through which the sensitive installations can be protected from this hacking. Now, I would like to know the views of the Government on this, Mr. Chairman, Sir, only providing a firewall is not going to solve the problem and the hon. Minister knows about it.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, this is a suggestion for action. As we said, there are millions of sites in hundreds of countries. It is very difficult to decide from which location they are coming. But if there are some advance laws or systems in any other country, we will contract them and see that this technology, is made available to Indians, whether in the private or the public sector.

SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR : With the accelerated growth of infromation technology, there are hackers of website. There are persons who corrupt the hard-disks, the programmes and the files. There is a problem regarding E-commerce which is flourishing now-a-days. In India, there is no legislation, whatsoever, to deal with this problem. There are laws and enactments abroad, particularly, in Western countries like America. Sir, rather than reacting later, I would like to know whether the hon. Minister would actively consider enacting legislations, specifically to deal with crimes regarding computer information technology.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, I appreciate the concern of the hon. Member. I think I have already said that this new Ministry came into existence only in November. In the Winter Session, i.e., in December itself, a Bill on Information Technology was introduced in Parliament. It is under the scrutiny of the Department-related Standing Committee on Science and Technology. Through you, Sir, and through the entire House, I would request the Committee and its Chairman to kindly give its report, if possible, by next week, or during this Session. Being the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, I can use my good offices to give priority to this and see that the Bill gets the approval of the Parliament.

SHRI N.K.P. SALVE : Are you pressurising the Committee?

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : No, I am not pressurising the Committee. I cannot pressurise anybody; forget about the Committee. The job given to me is to get pressure and not to pressurise. I am not pressurising. But, as rightly stated, information technology is the fourth generation of human communications Sir, human beings started communicating to each other first by gesture, then by spoken language, then by written language, and now, by a digital language, So it is going to change the whole life, all statutes, law book, etc. The Information Technology Bill, 2000 is a beginning. That is why I am requesting for an early report from the Committee. If it were to come in the Monsoon Session, another two-three months will go by. It would create more problems, looking to the speed in this area. I can only add one sentence that in Internet, a year is counted in three months and not in 12 months. With this speed, if the Committee works kindly places its report before Parliament, we will see that the law comes into existence.

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Sir, being the Chairman of the Committee. I may kindly be given an opportunity to brief the House on this.

MR. CHAIRAMAN : What do you want to say :

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Sir, the members of the Committee want to have an exhaustive discussion on the Bill because it is for the first time in the country that we are making enactments on cyber laws, and as such, this Bill is the first of its kind. There are eminent persons in this Committee who want to discuss every clause threadbare. So, the Committee needs more time. Sir, you will appreciate that the Bill having been referred to the Committee, I think it is more justifiable on our part to exhaustively discuss this Bill and send a comprehensive report. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, Question Hour is over.

Written answers to starred Questions

Promotions of Agricultural Mechanisation Among small and marginal farmers

*383. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) Whether Government have introduced any Central scheme for the promotion of agricultural mechanisation among small and marginal farmers in the country :

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how many small and marginal farmers have been benefited therefrom during the last five years?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA) : (a) to (c) A Centrally Sponsored-Scheme entitled Promotion of Agricultural Mechanisation among Small Farmers' has been under implementation since 1992-93. Under the Scheme, subsidy @ 30% of the cost of tractor including implements, limited to Rs, 30,000/- is available to the farmers individually or in groups, for the purchase of tractors up to 30 power-Take-Off Horse Power (PTOHP). Since inception of the Scheme, about 23,600 number of tractors have been subsidised benefiting moere than this number of farmers, including small and marginal farmers.

Protection of Traditional Right of Farmers and Breeders

*388. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :